



TESTIMONY OF
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Public Health Committee
February 27, 2013

HB 5988: AN ACT CONCERNING HEARING ASSESSMENTS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS.

Good Day to the Co-Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Verna Bernard-Jones and I am a school nurse at West Middle School in Hartford. I'm also President of the Hartford Federation of Teachers Health Professionals, a local union representing 65 school nurses and health professionals employed in the Hartford school district. I am writing testimony in opposition to HB 5988.

Hearing screening in Connecticut public schools is already mandated by the Department of Public Health. Auditory Screenings are done in grade KG-3rd, 5th & 8th by the nurse or her designee. Furthermore, Health Assessments are mandated upon school entry, PK and KG, 6th or 7th grade and 10th grade. The Health Assessment form has an asterisk (*) beside the information the Healthcare Provider must complete. In many cases the Auditory Screening is one of the areas not completed.

There may be several factors why this is not done. The provider may fear insurance will not reimburse for this exam or the overwhelming expectation that it will be done by the school nurse.

The problem is there is no one holding Primary Care Providers accountable. It should be the PCP that does the base line screening and continued follow-up over the years in collaboration with the school. This is best because the parent is with the child and can communicate any problem seen in the home.

Best practice would be that CGS Sec. 10-206 Mandating Auditory testing at the time of physical exam in grades, 6 or 7 and 9 or 10 be the standard of care and be enforced.